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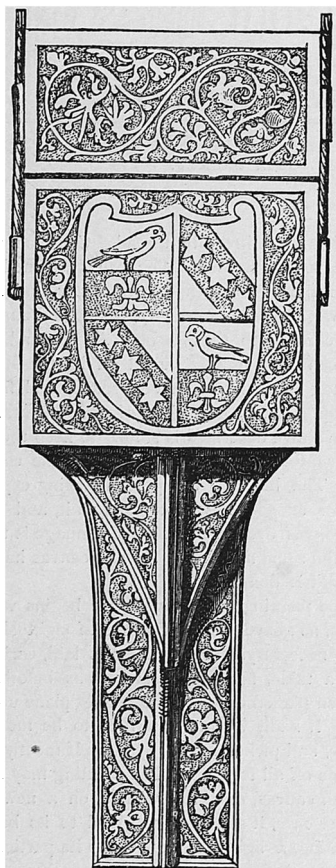
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covered with a mosaic of scraps of various colored morocco, as in artistic book-binding. Vellum or parchment panels boiled and moulded as above look very much like rude ivory carvings.

Taken altogether, what with repoussé, intaglio, carved, engraved, moulded and impressed work, gilding, illuminating, stitching, staining, stamping, branding, mosaic and encrusted work, it may be said that, for the amateur with only ordinary means, leather decoration offers the most fascinating of all the arts that may be practised at home and without special training. Panels of considerable size, if well designed and carefully executed by hand, would probably find ready sale in the principal cities at remunerative prices; but small objects, such as card receivers, cases and the like, are manufactured so cheaply that the amateur cannot hope to compete with them.



GERMAN STAMPED LEATHER ÉTUI. SIXTEENTH CENTURY.

#### THE ART OF MAKING SMOKE PICTURES.

A SMOKE picture is one in black and white, in which the black, with its different tints, consists entirely of smoke. It may closely resemble an etching when the needle point is used to manipulate the smoke on the surface over which it is distributed. Its success depends upon the ability to secure in smoke every degree of tint, from pure white to the deepest black, and to have each tint properly located. A very good surface to work upon is what is called milk glass—opaque, smoothly polished, white glass. Tiles answer as well, such as are used in mineral painting, but they are more expensive, and can be obtained generally only in small sizes, whereas the milk glass comes in large plates and can be cut to any size desired. Though much thinner than tiles, the amount of heat required in smoking is not sufficient to break even the thinnest plates if ordinary precaution be used. Very effective pictures can be made upon white cardboard also, but the methods of work are somewhat different and they will not be given in this article.

The glass having been selected and cut to the size desired, clean it thoroughly with soap and water, and then, to secure it for work, place it, with the polished side up, on a flat wooden board, large enough to allow a margin of at least an inch all around. The ordinary drawing-board would answer, but it is in most cases unnecessarily heavy. Any carpenter can put together a few quarter inch strips, properly braced to prevent warping, either by cross-pieces at the ends, as in the ordinary drawing-board, or by gluing or nailing cross-pieces to the back.

It is necessary to avoid warping, as any change from the flat surface may break the glass before the picture is completed. A very convenient way to keep it in proper position is by means of ordinary screw eyes inserted close enough to the glass for the eyes to overlap, but not close enough to press the glass tightly in any direction; they should be put about three or four inches apart. The screw eyes, projecting over the glass, support it when inverted over the flame for smoking. By turning them a little the glass can readily be removed and replaced at any time.

A little practice will soon make one familiar with the action of smoke and the methods of work; then, with patience and care, any picture, almost, may be attempted with good promise of success at the first effort. As a commencement, lighting an ordinary gas-jet, pass the inverted tile or glass once or twice through the flame until the surface is pretty darkly smoked; then, with the finger or hard brush, remove the smoke in spots and the clean china will be exposed; then, with a very soft brush, do the same in other places, and it will be noticed that it has not entirely cleared away the smoke, but that the glass remains somewhat tinted. If this tinted surface is resmoked and the soft brush applied again over the same place, the remaining tint will be a little darker than before, a certain amount of smoke adhering each time. The more often this is done, the darker the tint becomes, until a quite dark surface is obtained which a light brushing will not remove. From a darkened surface secured in this way varying tints can be obtained down to the white of the glass by softer or harder brushes—the darker the starting tint the more gradations will, of course, be possible.

In this preliminary light brushing I have used an old long varnish brush, pulling it to pieces and tying up small portions. It will be well to provide yourself for general use with a variety of brushes, small and large, firm and flexible, hard and soft, hog-hair and sable, and what are called blenders or softeners. For background effects, firm round brushes with flat ends are useful; sharpen the ends of the wooden handle of some, and make a slit in the end of the handle of others and insert a fine needle, securing it by thread wound tightly around.

Try the effects of working with these different brushes or tools, and you will readily learn how to grade the tints perfectly, the pointed stick ends, and the needle points, being effective in removing all traces of smoke in as small a spot as may be desired; with the needle point also, the smoke can be very evenly graded.

With the softeners and flat end brushes try the effects secured by gently patting the smoked surfaces without brushing, smoking and repatting if desired; various mottled effective background effects can be obtained by this direct stroke of the brush even when the glass has been but once smoked.

It is convenient to work sometimes with the glass upright. This can be done by means of rubber tubes attached to the gas-jet, and having burner tips inserted in the other end. Candle and other wicks are good smokers for small spaces, and for correcting little mistakes, but the ordinary gas-burner, with the flame at different heights, answers every purpose, and is all the writer has used for a great variety of pictures.

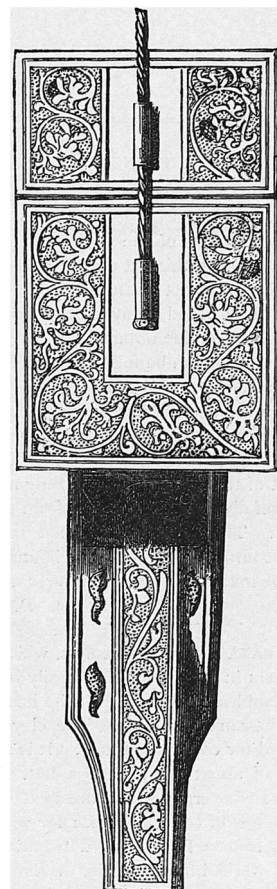
With the ability to secure whatever tint may be desired, and to locate it correctly, any picture may be attempted. It will be well to begin with a simple one having strong contrasts of black and white. Prepare the tint as before described, over the entire surface of the glass, leaving it, after the last smoking, unbrushed, and as dark as necessary where the darkest places are likely to come. Then, with the different brushes, carefully brush in the lighter tints where they belong. The softer and smaller the brushes, the better to begin with. If, when this has been done, it is found that the picture is not dark enough, as a whole or in parts, give a quick resmoking, and brush out again where necessary. The darker the working tint to begin with, the less occasion there will be for this resmoking. Sometimes only small spots need darkening; for these turn the gas low, and quickly expose just these spots.

Do not allow any smoking to obliterate entirely the outlines that have been made. If they seem to be lost at any time, they can probably be discovered by inclining the surface at different angles to the light, and then, while in the right position, indicated again by the needle point. Very few pictures can be completed without at least one resmoking after the outlines and values have been brushed and marked in. It will save time to leave the highest lights until the last, an intermediate tint answering until

then. A little experience will help very much in this and prove the best teacher.

The needle and pointed stick will be found indispensable in places which require accurate or delicate work, and where perfect shading is needed, as in figures, hands and faces, and important outlines of any kind. The brush alone, in such instances, will not answer, as it is impossible with it to remove the smoke with perfect accuracy. With the needle point you can pick your way carefully and make no mistakes but such as are easily remedied after a little resmoking. The needle, in fact, will prove so useful that it will be resorted to more often than necessary, when the brush would do the work as well and more quickly.

When the picture is considered finished, it only remains to fix it. The ordinary charcoal and crayon fix-

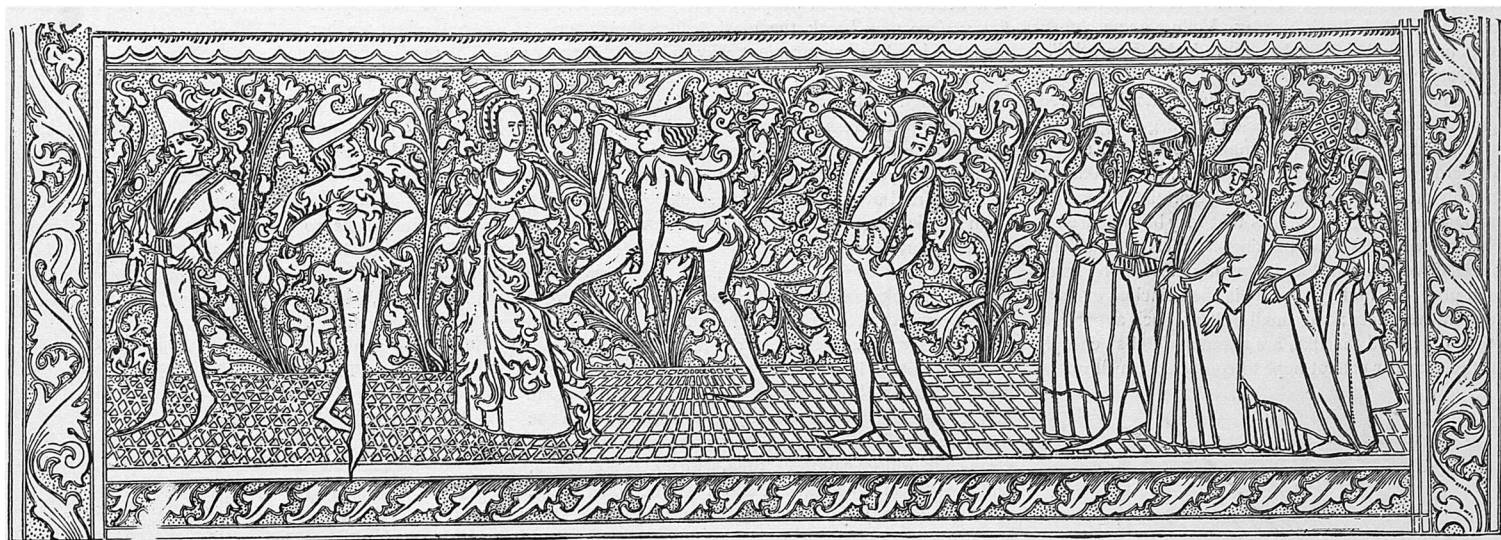


SIDE VIEW OF THE OLD GERMAN LEATHER ÉTUI  
ON THE OPPOSITE COLUMN.

atives accomplish this, but the result is unsatisfactory, and there is a much better method which leaves nothing to be desired, and that is by pouring varnish over the surface. I have used Soehnée Frères' and Devoe's retouching varnish with perfect success. It should be done as quickly and evenly as possible, as these varnishes are speedy driers; otherwise little ridges would be left. I suppose any thin transparent varnish would answer the purpose. If the picture is a small one, hold it in a horizontal position, pour on enough varnish to cover it completely, and then, tipping the glass, allow it to run off at one corner. Small pieces of blotting-paper held against the edges of the glass absorb what may remain there.

When the picture is a large one, it is desirable to adopt a little different method. Allow for a small margin in making the picture, and, when ready for varnishing, clean the margin a little and run a small ridge of putty down the sides, leading to a small opening at the lower edge in the centre of the margin, then, when the picture is tipped a little, the varnish may be freely poured on, covering every portion of the picture, and allowed to run off at the opening below into a cup or saucer. Place the picture to dry where it will be free from dust; it will not take long, and the smooth varnished surface will be very permanent and satisfactory. No glass will be required in framing, and it can be dusted carefully without injury.

If there should be reason to repeat an effective picture, and it is a copy of a photograph or engraving, the principal features of the original may be drawn upon trac-



FRENCH STAMPED LEATHER DECORATION OF THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY. FROM THE COVERING OF A CASKET.

ing paper, and the lights of the picture cut out of this tracing. Then, placing this cut outline over the smoke-tinted surface, in the exact position wanted, the smoke can be sufficiently brushed away on the exposed spots, and a good working outline obtained.

The directions given can be followed equally well upon an ordinary dinner-plate. Few mistakes can be made, but such as may be easily corrected by subsequent smokings. In a landscape, for instance, the sky portion could be removed and replaced several times without having to change the rest of the picture, it being only necessary to brush away carefully the added smoke from the portions already correct. This is mentioned that the beginner may not be discouraged if his picture is unsatisfactory. It can readily be made over again wherever necessary.

C. D. GIBSON.

THE ALCARRAZAS or water-coolers, which are sold mainly by dealers in curiosities, may easily be made by any one who dabbles in pottery, and who has or can get the use of a kiln, small or large. The clay used is of the sort required for common pottery. It is first kneaded into pellets of about the size of a nut. These are placed under water overnight, and are next day kneaded over into masses of convenient size for working. At the same time, from a fortieth to a twentieth part of common salt is worked into the clay, the larger proportion for the largest vases. The vase is made on the wheel in the usual manner, but is only half fired. The

porosity on which its action as a cooler depends is due, it would appear, to the presence of the salt in the clay and to the mild firing.

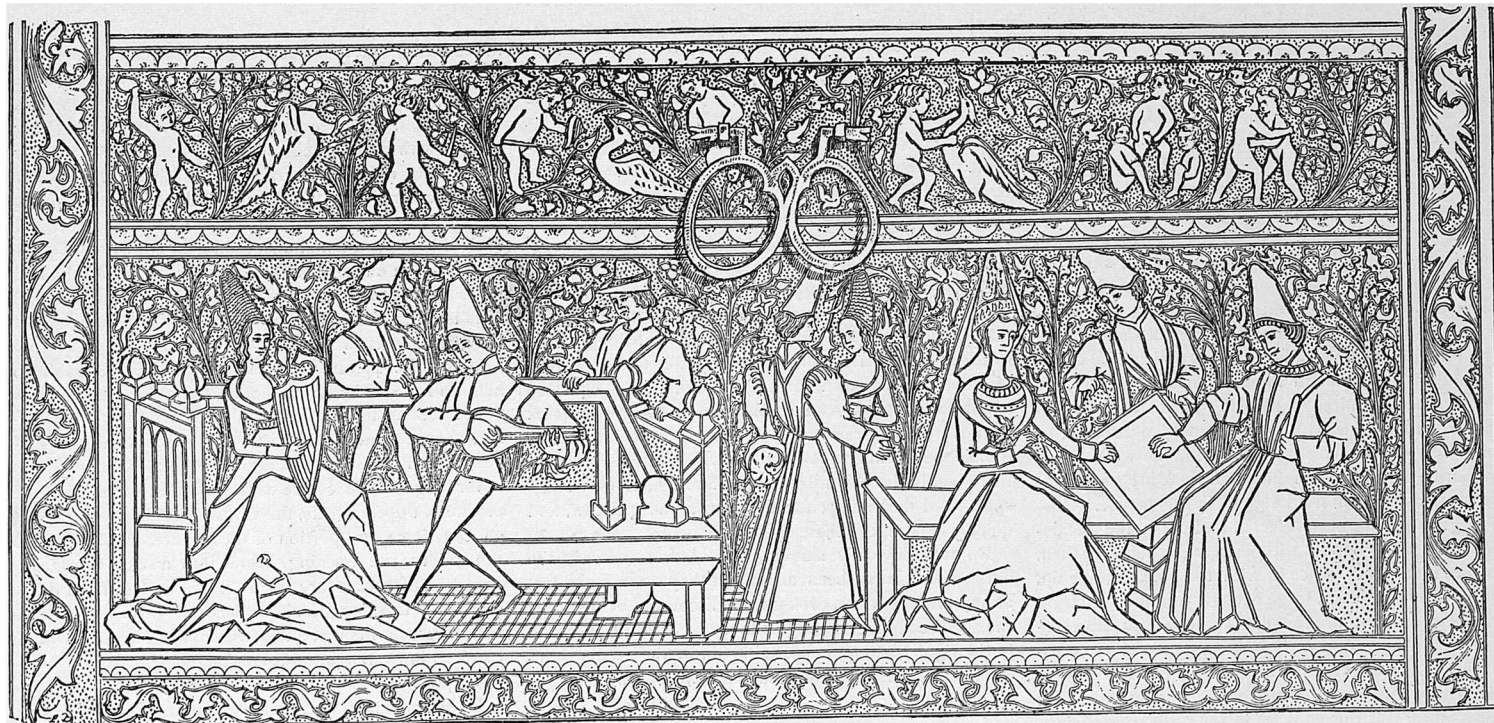
#### HOW A PAINTING IS RELINED.

THE operation of lifting a picture from a canvas or panel which has become rotten or worm-eaten and transferring it to a fresh canvas, is easier than is generally supposed; at least, Henry Garnier, in his "Guide de l'Amateur," shows there is nothing marvellous about it. In the case of a painting on canvas, one proceeds as follows: All fat or resinous matters, including, of course, the surface coats of varnish, are first removed, and a thin coat of the best glue is put over the picture. Grease or varnish would prevent the glue from taking hold on the painting, and it is therefore absolutely necessary to remove them. A light gauze, or, in the case of a large painting, a thin cotton or linen cloth is applied to the coat of glue, and is pressed down to make it adhere firmly and evenly, then it is allowed to dry for a day or two. This is covered with five or six sheets of paper, glued on successively, all of this preparation being called the cartonnage. When the cartonnage is dry, the picture is dismantled and placed on a table, where it is kept evenly stretched on all four sides.

It is often pretended that some chemical reagent is necessary for the principal operation—that of taking up the canvas. Other mystificators say that the canvas

must be picked off thread by thread. Commonly, nothing of the sort is needed. The canvas, turned wrong side up, is simply dampened with water and is kept moist, by wet cloths, if necessary, for some hours, more or less, according to the season. At the end of this time, the canvas is gently pulled off by the fingers of the operator, beginning with one corner and finishing with the opposite. The object of the preparation or cartonnage above described is simply to keep the painting from crumbling or falling apart when the canvas is removed. The back of the painting being exposed, a light canvas or gauze is first glued to it, and another stronger canvas over that. The cartonnage is then removed in the same manner as the old canvas has been, and the work is done.

When the painting is on wood, one begins with the cartonnage, as above, except that six to eight sheets of paper are necessary. The picture is laid, cartonnage down, on a table, and well fastened as before. The wood is then planed down with a convex plane until it is very thin. If badly worm-eaten, it is to be moistened, like canvas, and picked off bit by bit. If mostly sound, it may come off all together. The painting may then be mounted on canvas, or, if it is wished, on a new panel. In the latter case, it should have glued to its back, before mounting, a light gauze, to keep its particles well together, and then a sheet of thin gray porous paper, which will take up any moisture which may be in the picture and which could not escape through the panel.



FRENCH STAMPED LEATHER DECORATION OF THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY. FROM THE COVERING OF A CASKET.